

*The African Conquests*

249

despatched with twenty vessels; he appeared off Al Mahdia, and together with Hasan forced the Hammadites to abandon the siege. From this moment, the Ziridite prince became a protégé of Roger. \* This piece of intervention was followed up by actual conquest. The island of Gerba, in the Gulf of Gabès, had become a haunt of pirates whom neither Bugia nor Al Mahdia could control. The Sicilian fleet was turned against them, and an army was landed which occupied the place (1135). The treatment of the inhabitants was merciful; the most of them were indeed taken prisoner, but the *amdn* (terms for the vanquished) was at once proclaimed; those of the people who had escaped the Norman troops were allowed to ransom the others, and the town resumed, under a *cadi* installed by the Admiral, its normal life, George was too familiar with the Moslems to wish, or authorise, mere massacre and expulsion; Ms recommendations doubtless did much to confirm Roger in his natural inclination to treat towns taken from the Moslems with moderation, On the other hand, it seems that the Gulf of Gabès remained a centre for Norman

ships which  
were scarcely to be distinguished from  
the former  
pirates, The ships of Hasan himself  
were not  
safe from them, and they intercepted  
vessels  
sailing to and fro between Egypt and  
Al Mahdia,

"The dates are uncertain; the events took place  
apparently  
between as Oct., x 134, and *iB* Oct., 1135; *v.*  
Chalandon, *op*, *ciL*, 11,,  
p, 158.